

THINKING OF BUILDING, RENOVATING, ALTERING OR RELOCATING YOUR HOME?

All of these activities in the NT require building approval.

1. Getting Started

If you are thinking about building a new house or renovating, altering or moving an existing house you need to get a Building Permit before you carry out any work.

2. Engage a Registered Building Contractor

New amendments to the Building Act now require that if your building work is –

- (a) Over \$12,000; and
- (b) For Class 1a, 2 & 10 buildings or for a retaining wall which supports a Class 1a building; or
- (c) Renovations to Class 1a or 2 buildings which increase floor area of the building; or
- (d) Any alteration to a building, or
- (e) Relocating an existing building, you are required to utilise the services of a registered Building contractor.

3. Preparing Plans

Before you obtain a building permit you will need to prepare drawings of the proposed building. If you have engaged a building contractor they may be able to arrange plans on your behalf. It is advisable to seek the assistance of an architect or draftsman that has knowledge of the Northern Territory building system. The finished drawings must include an accurate and to scale site plan, floor plans, elevations and structural detail. Any structural plans must also be approved by a structural engineer.

4. Engage a Registered Building Certifier

Once you have received the plans of the proposed building, you will need to engage the services of a registered Building Certifier to obtain a Building Permit before commencing building work.

You will need to provide the Building Certifier with a completed application to build accompanied by the following:

- i) details of the proposed building (including drawings);
- ii) structural engineer's certification for the structural design;
- iii) certified plumbing design (for any plumbing work);

- iv) a statement that describes the purpose for which the building is to be used; and
- v) proof that the relevant insurance policy has been obtained;
- vi) Evidence of a building contract;
- vii) Application form for a building permit.

A Building Certifier will assess your application for a building permit to make sure that the proposed work complies with the *Building Act* and *Regulations*. The Building Certifier may also seek modifications and siting waivers if necessary.

A list of registered Building Certifiers is located at <http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/building-practitioners/CategoryList.jsp> or by contacting the Registrar of the Building Practitioners Board on 8999 8964.

5. Issue of a Building Permit

Once your application for a building permit to a Building Certifier has been approved, the building permit is valid for two years commencing from the date on which it is granted. This time may be extended if an application is made to the Building Certifier before the expiration of the time for which the permit is valid.

Before construction commences the building certifier should have:

- approved all plans
- forwarded the Building Permit and accompanying plans to the Director of Building Control;
- checked that building insurance has been taken out; and
- informed the builder of the appropriate mandatory inspections.

6. Inspections

During construction your Building Contractor is required to have the work inspected by the building certifier. These inspection stages include:

1. Pre-pour inspection – footings and slab;
2. Frame inspection;
3. Block wall reinforcing inspection;
4. Fire separation;

5. Wet areas; and
6. Final inspection.

It is important to note that your Building Certifier may require further inspections to be undertaken. These will be noted on your building permit.

7. Role of the Building Contractor

The building contractor has the responsibility to:

1. make sure that any work is covered by a building contract;
2. provide details of their registration to you and the Building Certifier;
3. arrange for an appropriate insurance policy to be taken out prior to a building permit being issued;
4. build in accordance with the Building Permit and approved plans;
5. Notify the Building Certifier when mandatory inspections are required; and
6. Provide a declaration to the Building Certifier upon completion of the building works stating that work has been carried out in accordance with building permit.

8. Completion of Work

At completion of building work the building contractor must sign a declaration stating the building works have been carried out in accordance with the permit. This must be provided to your Building Certifier prior to any occupancy permit being granted.

9. Occupancy Permit

When the building is constructed in compliance with the building permit and approved plans, you must make an application for an Occupancy Permit to your Building Certifier. The Building Certifier will advise what documents are required to be lodged with your application, and must decide a completed application within 20 days.

Note: A building cannot be occupied unless an Occupancy Permit has been issued. The Building Certifier must forward a copy of the Occupancy Permit to the Director of Building Control within seven (7) days of issue.

CONTACT DETAILS: Building Advisory Services

DARWIN
Ground Floor
Cavenagh House
Cnr Cavenagh & Knuckey Sts
DARWIN NT 0800
Ph: 8999 8965 or 8999 8966

KATHERINE
First Floor, Government Centre,
First Street
KATHERINE NT 0850
Ph: 8973 8926

TENNANT CREEK
Transport and Works Building
Leichardt Street
TENNANT CREEK NT 0860
Ph: 8951 9235 (Alice Springs)

ALICE SPRINGS
First Floor, Alice Springs Plaza
Cnr Todd Mall and Parsons St
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870
Ph: 8951 9253

F A C T S H E E T

CONSUMER CHECKLIST

= required

= not required

= Suggested

Building Work	Contract?	Building Permit?	Insurance?	Registered Builder?
New house	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Removing an Existing House to a new location ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Renovating Bathroom – Changing walls / fixtures / plumbing ¹		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renovating Bathroom – No change to walls / fixtures / plumbing ^{1*}		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alterations / Extensions to Existing House – increases floor area ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alterations / Extensions to Existing House – No increase in floor area ¹		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Existing House – changing windows / roof ¹		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additions to Existing House – Solar hot water systems; skylight; roof vents; satellite dish *		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carport / Verandah (to existing house) ^{1*}		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garden Shed / Workshop ^{1*}		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pergola / Shade Structure ^{1*}		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Fence ^{1*}		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renovating an existing Fence ^{1*}		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Retaining Wall – supporting building work ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
New Retaining Wall – not supporting building work ^{1*}		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Swimming Pools		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ Subject to provisions of the *Building Act* regarding type of work.

* subject to relevant exemptions policy

10. WHAT IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG?

Building practitioners typically work to professional and ethical standards. However, sometimes there may be concerns about a building practitioners work, professional conduct or ability to practise.

Your building contract must contain provisions for dispute resolution. It is important that you try and resolve any matter between the parties as often an agreed resolution is more in the parties interests than one decided by the Courts.

If you are unable to resolve your complaint then the Director of Building Control has responsibility pursuant to the *Building Act* for the investigation of complaints, and taking appropriate action if required against building practitioners. For further details contact Building Advisory Services on 8999 8985.

11. INSURANCE

Your Building Contractor is required as a condition of registration to obtain an approved policy of insurance against failure to carry out building work which complies with the Building Code.

This insurance policy is known as Home Building Certification Fund ('HBCF') and is currently provided by the Territory Insurance Office.

However it is proposed in 2008 to introduce a new insurance requirement known as Home Warranty Insurance (HWI) subject to competitive products being available. Home Warranty Insurance is an insurance policy that covers the single homeowner against non-completion of the contract. It also covers the single homeowner and the residential unit owner (where the unit is in a residential only building that is no greater than three storeys excluding a level for car parking) against non-compliance with the building code for six years after the completion of the building works.

The HWI (non-completion policy) will cover the additional expense associated with engaging another builder in the event of the original builder not being able to complete the work through death, disappearance or insolvency.

12. LEGISLATION

The *Building Act* provides the framework for the control and standards for building in the Northern Territory. The Building Regulations provide the technical requirements which have to be satisfied in order to comply with the Act. The relevant technical requirements are set down in the:-

- Building Code of Australia;
- National Plumbing Code (AS3500); and
- Code of practice for small on-site sewage and sullage treatment systems and the disposal or reuse of sewage effluent.

13. PENALTIES UNDER THE ACT

There are significant penalties under the *Building Act* if a person or building practitioner fails to meet the requirements of the Act. The penalties that can be incurred vary up to \$50,000. They are described in terms of maximum penalties only, which allows the court to award any penalty to that limit depending on the severity of the offence.

For further information about building rules and regulations contact the Building Advisory Services Branch in your region or visit our website <http://www.nt.gov.au/building>

